

Carolyn McCarthy

Education Accomplishments - 108th Congress

► ***ON THE ISLAND***

On the local front, Congresswoman McCarthy continues to visit every school in her district. This gives her an opportunity to stay in touch with Long Island's future generations. Each month, Congresswoman McCarthy recognizes schools demonstrating a unique contribution to Long Island education, through her "School of the Month" program. To honor "Schools of the Month," Congresswoman McCarthy recognizes them on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, and bestows a Congressional Proclamation of Distinction award.

► ***DOWN IN WASHINGTON***

Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy is a senior member of the House Education and Workforce Committee, and fights hard to provide educational opportunities for all Americans. Congresswoman McCarthy truly believes our nation's security begins with our children's education. In the 108th Congress, she has been very successful in achieving her goals, as you will see when you read on.

► ***KEY EDUCATION LAW PASSED – NOW FIGHTING TO FUND IT***

In January 2002, Congress passed the bipartisan No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. NCLB builds on Clinton-era education reforms of high standards, accountability and an increased federal investment in education. NCLB continues to offer great promise for ensuring that every American child - regardless of socioeconomic status or race - develops the core academic skills needed to compete in a global economy.

Before the ink was dry on this law, the President began to renege on his commitment to properly fund it. As we mark its second anniversary, it is unfortunate that the Administration continues to not live up to its end of the bargain. In fact, the President's 2004 budget moved to slash funding for NCLB by \$1.2 billion below what Congress appropriated in 2003. Funding shortages have consequences. More than half of all poor children eligible for additional instruction in key academic subjects will go unserved, and more than 50,000 teachers will not receive the high quality professional development and training that they were promised.

In addition, the Administration has fallen short on key issues that are critical to the successful implementation of this Act at the local level, including poor leadership on accountability standards, and in assisting states with Limited English Proficient students. At the same time, the

Administration has pursued an agenda at odds with public education, including advocating for private school vouchers and allowing discrimination with federal funds and denying basic civil rights for children and teachers.

Congresswoman McCarthy welcomes the president's recent announcement that he will seek \$1 billion in increased funding for both special education and low-income school programs. However, that will still leave the president and Congress many billions of dollars short of our commitment to America's schoolchildren. Congresswoman McCarthy has urged the President to join her in fully supporting this bill in his 2005 budget.

► **PROTECTING AND ENCOURAGING HIGHER EDUCATION**

Congresswoman McCarthy knows how critical it is that those students, who wish to participate in higher education, should have access to higher education. Higher education helps to provide all our citizens an opportunity to achieve the American Dream, and puts people at different socio-economic levels, and people of different races, on a level playing field. Congresswoman McCarthy believes one of the greatest investments we can make in our country, is to have a well-educated citizenry.

✓ **REAUTHORIZING THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT**

The funding authorizations for programs in the Higher Education Act (HEA) will expire during the 108th Congress. HEA is administered by the U.S. Department of Education (ED), and authorizes the federal governments' major student aid programs, as well as other significant initiatives. The reauthorization of the HEA has been split into several smaller bills, and much of it will be addressed this spring.

Issues Congresswoman McCarthy will consider are:

- Skyrocketing college prices
- Effectiveness of programs in increasing higher education access
- Measures to hold institutions accountable for educational outcomes
- The process of determining students' need for financial aid; and
- Impact of the growth in distance education

✓ **WORK ACHIEVED ON HEA**

During 2003, Congresswoman McCarthy worked hard on passing several bills. They include H.R. 438, the *Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act*, which expands loan forgiveness for teachers in low income schools; H.R. 2211, the *Ready to Teach Act*, which addresses K-12 teacher preparation; H.R. 3076, the *Graduate Opportunities in Higher Education Act*, which reauthorizes the graduate improvement programs under Title VII; and H.R. 3077, the *International Studies in HEA*, which reauthorizes the international education support for HEA.

✓ **WORK TO BE DONE ON HEA**

This spring, Congresswoman McCarthy will be finessing issues related to Title IV programs in the HEA, which include Pell Grants, student loans, work-study, aid to Minority Serving Institutions, TRIO, and Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEARUP).

✓**PROVIDING BETTER ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION**

Congresswoman McCarthy is working on H.R. 3519, the *College Affordability and Accountability Act*, and H.R. 3180, the *College Opportunity for All Act*, to help make college more affordable and accessible to all Americans. H.R. 3519 would ensure that states are no longer allowed to cut higher education funding, which passes on higher tuition prices to students and parents. Rather, H.R. 3519 provides incentives to colleges and universities that make their tuition affordable. H.R. 3180 doubles the Pell Grant maximum award; provides low cost loans by allowing student borrowers to re-finance loans; and, substantially increases investment in Minority Serving Institutions that predominantly serve low-income, minority and first-generation college students.

✓**REDUCING RED TAPE IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Congresswoman McCarthy is working to improve access to higher education and address soaring college prices through legislation which reduces red tape in federal student aid programs. H.R. 12, The “FED UP” legislation which has bipartisan support, makes it easier for Hispanic-Serving Institutions to receive federal aid, helps college students avoid defaulting on their student loans, and ensures aid can go to low-income and minority students for law school.

✓**CONGRESSWOMAN MCCARTHY TARGETS STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS**

- **SURVIVING SPOUSE BILL**-Congresswoman McCarthy has introduced H.R. 893, the “September 11 Surviving Spouse Student Loan Relief Act.” This bill is aimed at providing student loan forgiveness to the surviving spouses of the victims of the September 11, 2001 tragedies.
- **NURSE REINVESTMENT BILL**-Congresswoman McCarthy has introduced H.R. 934, the “Teacher and Nurse Support Act of 2003.” This bill would expand the loan forgiveness programs available for teachers, to include nurses.